

Remarks:

These remarks are responsive to the Office action dated July 8, 2009. Prior to entry of this response, claims 17-36 were pending in the application. By way of this response, claims 26, 27, 29, and 30 are withdrawn. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the application and allowance of the pending claims.

Restriction Requirement

Restriction is required between the following patentably distinct species:

Species I: Figs. 1-6.

Species II: Figs. 9-10.

Species III: Fig. 11.

In response, Applicant elects Species I without traverse. Applicant notes that Figs. 7 and 8 were not included in the restriction requirement. Applicant believes that Figs. 7 and 8 should be examined with Figs. 1-6. This is because each embodiment is directed to a stacking column, and therefore the embodiments may be efficiently searched together. It will be noted that this is not an admission that any specific features shown in the embodiments of Figs. 7 and 8 are not patentably distinct from any specific features shown in the embodiments of Figs. 1-6.

It is noted that the Office action states that the following claims correspond to these species:

Species I: Claims 1-13 and 19-22

Species II: Claims 14-16

Species III: Claims 17-18

However, claims 1-16 were previously cancelled by the preliminary amendment filed on January 31, 2006. Claims 17-36 are currently pending. Applicant submits that claims 17-25, 28, and 31-36 read on the elected species. Applicant further submits that claims 17 and 18 are generic, and reserves the right to rejoin the restricted species upon allowance of a generic claim.

Conclusion

Applicant believes that this application is now in condition for allowance, in view of the above amendments and remarks. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner issue a Notice of Allowability covering the pending claims. If the Examiner has any questions, or if a telephone interview would in any way advance prosecution of the application, please contact the undersigned attorney of record.

Please charge any cost incurred in the filing of this response, along with any other costs, to Deposit Account No. 503397.

Respectfully submitted,

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